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EUCHARISTIA.

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EUCHARISTIA,

OR A

VINDICATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

FROM THE

SUPERSTITION AND IDOLATRY

OF

MODERN INNOVATIONS.

BEING THE SUBSTANCE OF A COURSE OF SERMONS,
PREACHED BEFORE THE CONGREGATION
ASSEMBLING TO WORSHIP AT FITZROY CHAPEL.

BY THE
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EUCHARISTIA.

SERMON I.

THE NATURE AND PROPERTIES OF A SACRAMENT VIEWED IN REFERENCE TO MODERN INNOVATIONS.

For I have received of the Lord, that which also I delivered unto you.—1 COR. xi. 23.

SACRAMENTS are solemn ordinances, ordained of the Lord, and by Him given to the church, which He has espoused to Himself, as pledges of his love, and standing memorials of the grace and truth which came by Him. It is therefore most important unto the proper use of them that we have a correct apprehension of their nature and property; for to corrupt the sacraments of the church, by intrud-

ing into those things which we have not seen, by investing them with a property that does not belong to them, or by using them unto an end for which they were not intended, is to vitiate the water of life at the fountain-head, and turn food into poison. The danger of such mistakes is evident from the consequences that ensue, for they have not only a remote but a direct tendency, to superstition and idolatry. In these days of error and fearful heresy, when the sacred ordinances of the Lord's house are made the objects of open but insidious attack, we cannot be too jealous for these hallowed pledges of a Saviour's love, nor too earnest in contending for the faith once delivered to the saints. To preserve the unwary from error, to guard the unsuspecting from imposition, and every sincere believer from misconception in these solemn rites, we contend,

First,—That it is necessary unto the obligation and authority of a sacrament that it be of divine appointment. As the benefits and blessings of the covenant of grace, are of the

Lord, so is it the province and prerogative of the Lord alone to institute and ordain those religious observances which He would have to be the memorials and the seals of that covenant. The sacrament of circumcision, and that of the feast of the passover, under the law, were of divine appointment; they were held to be sacred and binding, and were religiously observed by the Jewish church, even to the coming of the Lord, as God's holy ordinances: And now when the sacrifice of the paschal Lamb, together with all the Jewish ritual, which were shadows of good things to come, was about to be superseded by the sacrifice of Christ, the real paschal Lamb, the Lamb of God—the substance of all—on the eve, and immediately after the celebration of that Jewish festival, and in the place of that, as a sacramental memorial for the christian church, Jesus Christ ordained the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. This was the prerogative of Christ, for Christ is God, very God, and very man in one Christ, God manifest in the flesh; even as he had before declared and confirmed, by the manifestation of that power

which belongs to God. You may remember on one occasion, when Jesus said to a man sick of the palsy, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," the unbelieving scribes excepted against him, saying, "Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies: who can forgive sins but God only?" This objection the Lord overruled by a proof of his divinity. "And immediately, when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts? Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house. And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion."* It belonged, therefore, of right, to Jesus Christ to ordain sacraments for his

* Mark ii. 8—12.

church, because Christ is God. Hence, when St. Paul would vindicate the pure administration of the Lord's Supper, from certain existing abuses that obtained in the Corinthian church, he prefaced his exhortation with these words, "For I have received of the Lord, that which also I delivered unto you." He was careful, you observe, to pre-occupy their minds with this fact—he vested his ministerial authority in this matter on the word of God—on the instruction he had received from the Lord, "For I have received," &c. From this argument of the apostle, we infer the conviction of his mind—1st, That it is necessary to *the obligation of* a sacrament, that it be of divine appointment.

No man has any right to sake unto himself that power; either to institute a sacrament, or to add to it, or take away aught from it; either to increase or diminish their number. Hence the blasphemy of the church of Rome in the boast of her seven sacraments, putting herself in the place of God, and making herself equal with God, she has conjoined with the two sacraments which Christ ordained as suffi-

cient for his church, five others of her own device, and demands in their behalf the same honour and veneration. We infer also, secondly, that it is necessary to the due observance of this sacramental rite, that it be *according to the instruction of Jesus Christ.* We have no right to deviate from the word of God in the use of it, nor to ascribe unto it a power with which Christ has not invested it withal, or employ it to an end for which it was not designed. But which of these obligations has not been superseded by the corrupt inventions of man? Hence the pernicious error of sacramental grace, of sacramental justification, which is not only the unscriptural dogma of anti-christian Romanism, but the disgrace in modern times of the Protestant church. Hence the idolatry of both systems, the transubstantiation of the one, and the consubstantiation of the other—both mixing up the essential presence of God in the elements of the eucharist, the one a material, the other a spiritual presence. And what difference is there between the two? to the eye of superficial observation it may appear great, but upon

close investigation, it will be found that with regard to results or consequences, there is none. If Christ be actually present in the elements, it is obvious to the senses that it cannot be in his human body—it would then be seen and handled; the human body of Christ has not ubiquity, it cannot be in one, and ten thousand other places at the same time, which would be the case were he present, wherever and whenever that ordinance is administered—it must be therefore, if at all, in his divine nature as God, in the Spirit, for God is a Spirit. If Christ, then, the Son of God, is present in these creatures of bread and wine, then not to worship him in them would be profanation, blasphemy; but if not, then so to worship him would amount to the accursed sin of idolatry. In either case, whether the presence be material or immaterial, the consequence is the same. Is it not important then, that we should have a right understanding in this matter, and to communicate worthily, make ourselves well acquainted with the instructions of our Lord pertaining to that ordinance. Yes, and if we take the word of God

for our guide, we shall discover that no such idolatrous character is attached to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper; but on the contrary, that no particle of the *divine essence*, no *divine presence* whatever, is imparted to the elements. And that no such *divine power* is given to the symbol of any sacrament, may be gathered from the Scripture everywhere, and especially from the nature and intention of the ordinance itself. This subject, however, requires more minute investigation, and more particular explanation than can be compressed in the detail of one discourse.

I shall content myself now, in application of what has been said, by showing you how repugnant the doctrine of sacramental grace is to the word of God, the standard and test of all truth. Let us then—

Secondly,—Bring certain systems of modern innovation to bear upon this rule, and we shall see how subversive they are of the principles of the christian faith.

1st. *It is incompatible with the doctrine of free grace.* It ascribes to the creature what belongs alone to the Creator,

invests a ceremony with the power of God, the power of giving life to all who come to that sacrament. It places at the disposal of man the greatest of all blessings, the grace of God which bringeth salvation, which is the alone gift of God. This is to elevate the sacramental symbols and to place them in the seat, yea, in the throne of God—to make a god of them, and render communicants in some measure independent of God Himself. Now the Scripture saith, that grace and life are the gift of God, "This is the record that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is *in his Son;* he that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life." But according to the doctrine of sacramental grace, the sacrament gives life to them that receive it, provided they are worthy; they, therefore, who eat of that bread and drink of that cup, shall live by it. It engages to bestow, and that *conditionally,* what God can alone give, and what He promises *gratuitously.* What is this but to subvert the doctrine of the grace of God, as revealed in the Gospel? "Now to him

that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." *

2nd.—*It goes on to supplant the Son of God in his vicarious and mediatorial offices.* It is taught by the votaries of this system, that if a man repents, viz., is stung with remorse of conscience and a dread of death, and if he resolves on amendment of life, that by receiving the sacrament his sin will be pardoned, that he will thereby be reconciled unto God, and justified freely from all things. Hence, the superstition which prompts many impenitent, unregenerate, and deluded souls, on a sick and dying bed, to be importunate for the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, making *that* their Christ, *that* "the way, the truth, and the life," *that* their passport to heaven. And how many are there, because they frequent the Lord's table, who fancy themselves to be therefore penitent, and pardoned, justified, and saved—*Penitent*, though they have never once sorrowed

* Romans iv. 4, 5.

after a godly sort, with heart-brokenness for sin; *pardoned*, though they have never looked unto Christ for pardon by his blood, which can alone merit it; *justified*, though ignorant of God's righteousness, the imputed righteousness of Christ which can alone justify them; and *saved*, though strangers to the faith of Christ, which can alone bring them salvation. If Christ has aught to do in this system, it is in form, in ceremony, in name, and not in power. No, the ordinance with them is enough, to this they look, in this they trust, this is their spiritual nostrum, the panacea for all their spiritual diseases. What is this, then, when the ordinance is made to occupy the place of Christ, but to heap dishonour upon his name and his work, to supplant the Son of God in his vicarious and mediatorial offices? But once again, and more than this,

3rd.—*It intrudes into the office, and assumes the prerogative of the Holy Ghost.* We know from the Scripture that it is the Holy Ghost who taketh of the things which are Christ's, and sheweth them unto us; who

leadeth into all truth—who is the author and giver of every good, and every perfect gift, which cometh down from the Father of lights; but if the elements of the sacrament can impart the benefits and blessings of the cross of Christ, administer as above stated—pardon, peace, righteousness, and eternal life—,then are they impregnate with Deity, the power and prerogative of the Holy Ghost, and supersede the office of the Third person in the Trinity. By this rule, then, we have no need to look farther than the outward signs and symbols of ordinances; for life and for grace, that we may receive grace for grace, and be changed from glory to glory, which is in direct opposition to the word of God, which ascribes the manifestation of these and all spiritual blessings to the office, the divine operation of the Holy Ghost. Such is the anti-christian tendency of a sacramental presence, or sacramental grace. Nor let it be admitted in defence—and here let us meet the objection once for all—that those persons say, they do not look to the elements, but unto God as present in those holy mysteries: if they worship God as

present in the elements, they worship Him in a way that He has not appointed; and to worship Him by "the likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the water under the earth, is idolatry; contrary to the commandment, "Thou shalt not bow down to them." This was the sin of Israel at Horeb, and of Jeroboam, in Bethel and in Dan; in both cases the people professed to worship Jehovah, the Redeemer of Israel, but as it was by means of a creature, things made with hands, it was will-worship, idolatry, and an abomination unto the Lord. But is there no divine presence, no especial benefit attached to the *worthy partaking* of these holy mysteries? Yes, but the presence, the spiritual blessing, is not in the symbols, but *in* and *upon them* that so communicate, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. They are means ordained of Christ to that end, that while we commemorate his dying love, our hearts may be filled with joy and gladness. It is the Eucharistic feast, a feast of love thanksgiving, and praise.

SERMON II.

NO DIVINE PRESENCE, OR SPIRITUAL PROPERTY, INHERENT IN THE SYMBOLS OF A SACRAMENT.

That the Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread; and when He had given thanks, He brake it and said, Take, eat, this is my body which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me.—1 Cor. xi. 23, 24.

In the former discourse from these words, we endeavoured to show you, that any and every notion of a divine presence in the sacramental elements of the Lord's Supper, whether material or spiritual, is altogether unscriptural—opposed to the spirit of the ordinance

—subversive of the fundamental principles of the faith of Christ, and has a direct tendency to superstition and idolatry. It usurps the power of the Godhead—would supplant the Son of God in his mediatorial work, and intrude into the office of the Holy Ghost, in the great work of man's redemption, his personal acceptance with God, through Christ Jesus, and the life that comes by Him. We proceed, as proposed, to go more into detail on this subject, and to prove, that inasmuch as the accidents of bread and wine, or the elements of the Lord's Supper, even after they have been sanctified by prayer, remain as to their nature, unchanged; so with regard to their essential properties, they are *in themselves* the same. In support of this position, let us enquire,

First. Did any divine property or spiritual virtue pass upon the bread and wine, by the words of Jesus Christ when he ordained that sacrament?

There is nothing in the Scripture to justify such an assumption; nothing in the words of Jesus which He used at the institution of the

ordinance, more than amounts to, the sanctifying, or setting apart the bread and wine for a religious or holy purpose. The disciples who were present at the holy supper bear witness of the same, and agree in their testimony. The Evangelists, Matthew and Mark, say, "Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it."* Luke has the same version as St. Paul. "He took bread, and gave thanks and brake it."† There is no discrepancy here between them; the word to bless is very commonly used in holy writ for thanksgiving and praise, as, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, &c.," which shows the sense of the word in the Evangelists above quoted. Jesus Christ did not bless or give thanks to the elements. He blessed and praised his heavenly Father, gave thanks unto Him for his great goodness in giving up the Son of his bosom, for having committed into his hands the work of mediation and redemption, which He was now about to finish by his sacrifice, and seal with his blood.‡ He glorified his Father in all things, and therefore

* Matt. xxvi. 26; Mark xiv. 22. † Luke xxii. 19.
‡ See John xvii.

now asks his blessing on the sacramental institutionæ, which was to be to his church ever after, the memorial of his body broken on the tree, and a lasting pledge of his dying love in laying down his life on the cross of Calvary, and giving Himself for them. For this, Jesus Christ, the Son of man, gave thanks unto God, because by this the name of his Father would be glorified, his people redeemed, principalities and powers of darkness would hereby be despoiled, the gates of death and hell broken up, and the kingdom of heaven opened unto all believers. As a perpetual remembrance of this, his so great salvation, "The Lord Jesus the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He brake it and said," &c. As therefore, at the institution of the ordinance, there was nothing in the words of Christ to originate the doctrine of any divine presence, or impanation therein, so neither was there in the mode of administration practised by the church in the primitive ages of Christianity. What precise form of words they may have used, if any, at the consecration of the

elements, is not recorded; but we read* that they, "continuing with one accord daily in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their meat with gladness, and singleness of heart." But in the present day, when much superstitious feeling attaches to the prayer of consecration, it behoves us to consider well its right meaning and intention. To consecrate is to set apart any thing, or devote it to sacred uses—hence the custom that prevailed of consecrating churches; when places of worship began to be built, they were consecrated or set apart for holy and religious purposes; but no act or deed of consecration can change the nature, or properties of the thing consecrated. A church that is erected may be considered a spiritual building, because built for spiritual purposes, even as the temple at Jerusalem was called the temple of the Lord. But as the solemn dedication of that temple unto the Lord by Solomon, did not impart any divine or spiritual properties to that edifice or that altar, so, neither does any prayer of consecration impart any spiri-

* Acts ii. 46, 47.

tual nature or divine property to the church so consecrated. This would be to contend, that the church-walls, because raised and dedicated to a holy purpose, are invested with the power of communicating those spiritual blessings, to which end they were raised and dedicated; which would be an absurdity. No less absurd is the notion, that the ministerial consecration of the bread and wine in the Eucharist by prayer, converts those elements into the body and blood of Christ, either by changing their nature, or imparting unto them a supernatural property or power. We therefore contend, that as, at the holy supper, after the blessing over it, and thanks given for it, no change was operated on the elements by our Lord; so do the bread and wine after the prayer over them, retain the same nature and properties, as they do the same form and figure; and are by that consecration *set apart only* as the commemoration of the sacrifice of the death of Christ, and of the benefits which we receive thereby.

Secondly. When the Lord said, "This is my body," *did He attach to the ordinance, the*

power of communicating the spiritual benefits of his cross and passion? "This is my body which is broken for you: this do in remembrance of me." That our Lord did not mean by these words his own natural body, is obvious to common sense; for how could the bread which He brake with his hands, be his body broken on the tree, when as yet He had not suffered, but was present with them?

To receive these words literally, would be to hold, that Jesus Christ did actually eat his own body, and that his disciples did the same while as yet He was living and dwelt among them. Our Lord herein spake not literally but figuratively; as did St. Paul, when he said of the rock in Horeb, "that rock was Christ." And many good reasons may be assigned for the phraseology. 1st. *This mode of expression was familiar to the Jews.* When Jesus Christ said at different times, "I am the door," "the way," "the good shepherd," "the true vine," "the bread of life," the people did not mistake his meaning, but put that construction upon his words, of which they were figu-

* 1 Corinthians xi. 24.

ratively expressive. 2ndly. *This mode of expression was also fraught with great advantages.* It was not only calculated to bring down, and accommodate, sublime and heavenly things to the comprehension of the people, but the metaphor used was suitable to open out and enforce some particular doctrine, or truth, pertaining either to the person of Christ or his work. When He would teach them, for instance, how they might enter into life—into his church militant on earth, or triumphant in heaven—He said, "I am the door, by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out and find pasture." When He would make known to them the only way of access to the Father, He said, "I am the way," "no man cometh unto the Father but by me," "by whom," says Paul, "we have access, by faith, into the grace, wherein we stand and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God." When He would figure out the great love and tender care He had for his people, He called himself the good Shepherd, for his people are the sheep of his pasture. By the vine and the branches, He in-

structed them in the close union that subsists between himself and all the members of his mystical body, the church: by the bread of life, He symbolized one especial property of his sacrifice. He described himself as the bread which cometh down from heaven, which He would give for the life of the world, the true manna, of which the manna their fathers ate in the wilderness was a type and a figure.

And now that He might draw out the hearts of his disciples to act faith in Him; and when He should be absent to live by faith upon Him, to trust in Him, and depend upon Him for the fulfilment of all He had either taught or promised, "He took bread, and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said, Take, eat: this is my body, which is broken for you; this do in remembrance of me."*

Thirdly. This mode of expression was moreover, most appropriate to the institution. "This is my body."

It was immediately after the feast of the passover, when they had supped, that Jesus

* 1 Cor. xi. 24.

Christ thus spake, and it was in allusion to the paschal lamb, and in contradistinction to it, that our Lord made use of this form of words—"This is my body." The paschal lamb was called by the Jews, *the body* of the passover, the figure of Him that was to come, and now that Jesus Christ was come, and that typical ordinance was to be abolished as of no further use; when in the place of that, He was about to institute the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, He took bread, &c., saying, "This is my body; this do in remembrance of me." What can be more appropriate to convey to our minds the true nature of the Lord's Supper, than the allusion here made? It comprises at once, a commemoration and a feast. It is the memorial of the sacrifice of Christ—of redemption by his blood—and of the life and immortality which come by Him. As the paschal lamb was a type of the sacrifice which Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, in the fulness of times *would make*, so is the sacramental bread a memorial of the Lamb slain, the sacrifice which Jesus Christ *has made*. By the one, the Jews memorial-

ized their redemption from Egypt; by the other, the Christian Church commemorate their redemption from sin and death. And, as under the law, *they only* enjoyed the spiritual benefits of that festival who were Israelites indeed, who beheld Christ the Lamb of God shadowed forth in that ordinance; so, under the gospel it is believers only that are cherished, and strengthened, and comforted, by the Lord's Supper; who see Christ with the eye of faith, and feast upon Him in that sacrament. They only know that his flesh is meat indeed, and his blood is drink indeed; that man does not live by bread alone, but by every word which proceedeth out of the mouth of God. Jesus Christ, in these words, then, did not speak literally, but figuratively; neither did He attach to the consecrated bread and wine, the essential property or power to communicate to any one the spiritual benefits of his cross and passion.

SERMON III.

THE DESIGN OF JESUS CHRIST IN THE INSTITUTION OF THE EUCHARIST.

After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood; this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.—1 Cor. xi. 25.

In the further prosecution of this subject, part of which has already been opened out, we submit only by way of preface, the proposition deducible from the words before us. At the ordinance of the holy supper, when Jesus Christ took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, "This is my blood of the new testament," did he mean, that the wine was his blood, or, what is more to our purpose, that it then possessed the properties of his blood? if so,

then the sacramental wine is endowed with all the cleansing virtue and sanctifying properties of his sacrifice and death. This is the point we controvert—that we may be divested of any such superstitious feeling, that our souls may be preserved from the sin of such idolatrous worship, let us examine the statement here made by St. Paul—"After the same manner also he took the cup, when he had supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me."*

First. What was the testament to which the apostle had respect in these words, "This cup is, &c.?"

This testament or covenant, for the meaning is the same, they are convertible terms, was the covenant of grace—of grace abounding to the chief of sinners, in the redemption of the world, by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, of which the symbols in the Lord's Supper are both a sign and seal.

In that hallowed compact the covenanting parties, were the Triune Jehovah; it was a

* 1 Cor. xi. 25.

covenant made by sacrifice, of which Jesus Christ the Son of God was himself the surety. And it is termed the *new* covenant, not as to its date, for it was from everlasting.* Neither was it called *new*, with regard to its substance, for Christ was the substance both of the old and the new testament. The legal sacrifices were all shadows of Christ, the Lamb of God, slain from the foundation of the world.† It is called *new*, in reference to the mode of its administration, its more excellent glory; the larger measure of gifts and graces by which the Lord, under the gospel economy, would establish his covenant with the heirs of salvation. Hence Jesus Christ is called the mediator of the new testament—the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises, "for by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified."‡ This, then, was the testament to which the apostle had respect in these words, "This cup is the new testament in my blood." That he spake figuratively is plain:

* 2 Sam. xxiii. 5. Heb. xiii. 20, 21.

† Gal. iii. 6—8; Heb. ix. 14, 15. ‡ Heb. x. 14—18.

there is a figure in the fore-front of his speech —the cup for the testament. He did not mean that the cup was literally the testament; or that the cup was the wine; or that the wine was the blood; but only a sign or symbol of the covenant sealed by the blood of Christ, which is therefore called the blood of the covenant. We have the same mode of expression in the dedication of the first testament. "Behold the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words."*

Moses did not mean that that was the blood which, in the fulness of time, should be shed by the Redeemer of Israel, the surety of the covenant, or that it had the efficacy of that blood; but only that it was a typical exhibition of it; like the bow in the clouds, in the promise given to Noah, it was to be to him, and to all men for perpetual generations, a token or sign. "I do set my bow in the cloud, and it shall be for a token of a covenant between me and the earth."† Such was the purpose of Jesus Christ, in the dedica-

* Exod. xxiv. 8. † Gen. ix. 13.

tion of the new testament, when he said, "This is my blood of the new testament," viz. a sign or token of the blood he was about to shed on Calvary's mount; teaching his disciples by that ordinance to look to his precious blood-shedding, to his sacrifice and death, without which the new testament had been left without signature or seal, and of none effect. So argues Paul. "For a testament is of force after men are dead; otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth. Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood," &c.* Such, then, was the testament, and such also the meaning of the apostle in these words, "After the same manner, &c." ver. 25.

Secondly. What is meant by the blood of the testament? It was the blood of Jesus Christ, who as above noticed, by his precious blood-shedding, ratified and sealed the covenant of grace.

It was the blood of Christ, the Lamb of God, who, "by the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, to purge your

* Heb. ix. 17, 18.

conscience from dead works, to serve the living God." Of this, in the feast of the passover, the blood of the paschal Lamb was a type, even as the wine in the sacramental cup is now a symbol. Both the type and the symbol have the same object—both were of divine appointment—both sacramental—both ordained to the same end—both, therefore, had the same properties, the properties of a sacrament. Was there any *inherent grace* in the type, the blood of the paschal lamb? there was none; so neither is there in the symbol, the cup of the Eucharist. The type had no essential virtue in itself, to purge the conscience, any more than the other law sacrifices: "It is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats can take away sin." The type had no cleansing property to sanctify the soul, no ability to purge the "conscience from dead works, to serve the living God," so neither has the symbol. It is evident, therefore, when Jesus Christ, in the holy supper, adopted this form of words, which is followed by St. Paul, "This cup is the new testament in my blood," that he spake also figuratively,

that He did not mean his disciples to understand that the cup was the testament, or that the wine in the cup was the blood of the testament, or that the wine thereby had any divine or saving properties infused into it, that could cleanse the conscience, give peace to the wounded spirit, or healing to the soul. This had been, indeed, to make the ordinance in the likeness of God, yea to make a God of it; for unto God alone that power belongeth. This had been for the Son of God to abdicate his throne, share the sceptre of his power with his creature, man, and give his glory to another.

Thirdly. What is the design of the sacramental cup in the New Testament? "this do ye, as oft as ye drink in remembrance of me."

It was ordained by Christ, as a memorial —the bread a symbol of his body—the wine a symbol of his blood— and that most appropriately so—for in all who receive the atonement made by his precious sacrifice, the blood of Christ is the wine that maketh glad the heart of man. Of this the cup is a

symbol, and a remembrance. So the apostle explains it, "This do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me." But if the Lord is present in the symbols in any way, how can they be a remembrance of him? how can Christ be a memorial of Christ? A token of remembrance implies the absence of that, of which it is a memorial: the presence of the object entirely defeats the intention of a remembrance! but the Lord's Supper is especially called *a remembrance* of Christ, therefore Christ is not himself there present. No, it is an ordinance to bring to our remembrance the meritorious cross and passion of our Saviour Christ and the benefits which we receive thereby. It is a *commemorative*, and not a *saving* ordinance therefore; by coming to which we obtain the redemption of our transgressions, or life to our souls, or other blessings which are alone to be found in Christ, and received by faith that is in him. This, however, is the fearful error into which those are unwittingly betrayed, who are taught to believe that God is present in the outward signs of the ordinance—they make it a saving ordi-

nance; but if such were the case, would not the saving effects be consequent upon its outward administration? The blood-shedding of Christ, as we have shown, was the seal of the covenant, and the sprinkling of the blood, or the application of the blood to the heart by the Holy Ghost, in the day of love, in the day of effectual calling, viz. the new birth, is that gracious act by which the Lord ratifies and establishes his covenant with all believers. Now is this the fact, in the celebration of the Lord's Supper? Has the cup of the testament in that sacramental ordinance the property or the power to make a covenant, or ratify the covenant of grace between God and the souls of men?

Does it bring every communicant into the bond, into the privileges and immunities of that covenant, the blessings of which are pardon, peace, righteousness, and eternal life? Does that sacramental wine, though a hallowed symbol of the blood of the covenant, administer the cleansing efficacy of that blood, even the blood of Christ, the blood which cleanseth from all sin? Can it gender in the

heart that faith which is necessary to apply the blood of Christ to the conscience, called the blood of the sprinkling, because thereby "the heart is sprinkled from an evil conscience?" Does the administration of that wine sanctify to the purifying of the soul, or "purge the conscience from dead works to serve the living God?" In a word,—can the wine in that cup quicken the soul which is dead in trespasses and sins, make a man a new man, and a believer in Christ? It does not—it cannot—it has no such property—no such intention, it is not, therefore, a saving ordinance. This question, however, it may be objected, is puerile, because such only are invited and expected to come to the Lord's table, who are truly penitent, are believers in Christ, and who being humbled for their sins, have repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ! Grant this, then, and what follows? If, in the first instance, they have "the grace of God, which bringeth salvation," "they are quickened by his Spirit, regenerate souls, are in the faith of Christ, have redemption by his blood, the forgiveness

of sins," and so, are saved by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Then, when they take the sacramental cup, what remains for them to do, but to commemorate with thanksgiving, the sanctifying properties of the blood of Christ by which they are washed, and sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the spirit of our God." What need then is there of any divine presence in the symbol, in the sacramental wine, for that purpose? What good end would it answer? But again, it is contended that though they are "all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus," yet being the creatures of infirmity, being exposed to many trials, to be in heaviness through manifold temptations, their faith requires to be strengthened, they come to the ordinance, therefore, that they may be confirmed, established, and settled.

It is true that no child of God is perfect—that all are creatures of infirmity, and need to be established in their most holy faith; all are exhorted to grow in grace—that they may be increased "in all spiritual wisdom and un-

derstanding," be "rooted and grounded in love," to be strong in faith: but wherein does the strength of faith consist?—not in itself, not in the sacramental ordinance, or in any other means of grace—but in its object; Christ is the proper object of faith, Christ is the believer's strength: if he is strong, he is "strong in the Lord and in the power of his might." But they who hold that there is a divine presence in the element, look to the cup—look to the sacramental symbol for strength—rest their hope in sacramental grace—put the sacrament in the place of Christ, and make *that* and not Christ the object of their faith.

This, nevertheless, they deny, and confidently affirm, that though they believe there is therein some kind of presence, they do not look to the sacrament for the benefit and the blessing, but in that to Christ. But if the divine presence be in the cup, what need have they to look to Christ? By this confession they concede the point—by this they acknowledge, that there is no cleansing or sanctifying virtue in the cup which they take;

it follows, therefore, as a necessary consequence, that as the spiritual blessings of the sacrifice of Christ—the materials to strengthen their faith are not in the elements—that the blessing is not in the cup, nor grace in the wine—that there is no Christ there, no presence of God, no divine presence of any kind. To what, then, does this strange notion amount? What kind of presence is that, in these creatures of the bread and wine, which administers to them no co-essential virtue, or divine property whatever, either to cleanse, justify, or sanctify the soul. What is it but vain adoration and idolatrous worship in them that hold it? Yes, the sin and guilt of idolatry are upon them—they worship the creature, instead of the Creator; or, what is the same thing, the Creator in the creature, and such worship is idolatry.

SERMON IV.

THE EUCHARIST, NOT A SACRIFICE, BUT A SACRAMENTAL FEAST.

For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.—1 COR. xi. 26.

TO OBVIATE, as it would appear, all misapprehension or mis-application of the words of Jesus Christ, who at the last Supper, speaking figuratively, said of the sacramental bread, "This is my body," and of the cup, "This is my blood," our apostle, in further explanation, and to secure, if possible, to this ordinance its legitimate use, now lays aside all figure of speech, and says, "As often as ye eat this *bread* and drink this *wine*, ye do show the

Lord's death till He come," denoting thereby that the sacramental elements were still bread and wine which the Lord has commanded to be received in that sacrament. But, alas! this has not proved sufficient to elude corruption or perversion. The words of Jesus Christ, "Take eat, this is my body," are urged as a plea and a proof of the actual presence of our Lord, in the bread that is broken; this is the stone of stumbling and rock of offence. Hence, there are some, as the Romanists, who maintain that the bread and wine are transubstantiated into the very body and blood of Christ, and others, who hold, though not in the like gross exhibition, that there is in the elements, a presence of some kind co-essential with Christ in the virtue of his sacrifice and death. And in confirmation of this, it is not seldom that we hear the appeal made to the words of Christ, which he spake on a different occasion, and to a very different end, viz., "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, ye have no life in you." But how could those words apply to the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, when as

yet, it was not; it had not been yet ordained: how could there be any allusion to an ordinance that did not exist? That such notions, therefore, are false, and that they cannot be entertained without a perversion of the words of Christ, and a violation of the ordinance, will appear evident from the following considerations.

First,—This interpretation of the words of Christ is not justified by the expression used. When Jesus Christ gave the bread which he had broken to his disciples, which he designed to be a sacramental token of his body broken on the tree, or his crucified humanity, he said, "Take eat, this is my body." That the Lord herein spake figuratively, in reference to the sacrifice he was about to make of himself once offered, has already been noticed, and opened out to you. This interpretation we further defend, from the use to which the expression, the word "eat," is applied, and the sense which it holds in other parts of Scripture. When the Lord called Ezekiel to his prophetic office, there was presented to him the roll of a book, which book he was

commanded to eat.* Another example of the same kind occurs in the instruction given to St. John.† In both these cases there was a commission given, a testimony for God, and the substance thereof was written in a book, which they were directed to eat up; yea, to Ezekiel it was said, "Cause thy belly to eat: and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee." Were they to eat the book literally? No! What more was intended, than they should read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest what was written therein, that "the word of God" might "dwell in them richly in all wisdom," to the faithful and full accomplishment of their mission. Such is also the sense of the term here, and in the passage to which we have above adverted, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, ye have no life in you."‡ What is it to eat the body, or the flesh, and drink the blood of the Lord, but to believe in the atonement made by the body and blood of Christ on the cross, and live upon Him by faith. Such is the explanation given by

* Ezekiel ii.—10, and iii. 1, 2.

† Rev. x. 8—11. ‡ John vi. 53—58.

Christ Himself, (63 v.) "It is the Spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing;" because it is by the Spirit, through faith, that we have life by Christ, and eternal life through him. The mutual indwelling between Christ and his church here mentioned is effected, not by the intervention of any sacrament, but by the Spirit of God through faith. We dwell in Christ by faith, looking to him for life. He dwells in us by his Spirit, by which the life is given. And hence, by the Spirit of God through faith, we have union and communion with Him—are made one with Christ and Christ with us, one body, of which Christ is the Head. And as all the members of the natural body have nourishment ministered unto them by the head, as that which we eat, and that which we drink passeth by the head, so have all the members of the church mystical food and nourishment ministered unto them by Christ, "who is the Head of the body, the church, the fulness of Him that filleth all in all." "As the living Father hath sent me," saith the Lord, "and I live by the Father, so he that eateth me, or believeth on

me, even he shall live by me."* From these several quotations, to which others might be added, it is evident that the expression here used is wide and comprehensive, and is metaphorically employed by Jesus Christ, to set forth not only the perfection of his sacrifice, and the virtue of his atoning blood, but the divine efficacy of the faith by which it is received, applied, and appropriated, by all them that believe. The metaphor is taken from the bread, the symbol appointed, which is almost its own interpreter; for as bread is the staff of life, and that by which the natural life is sustained —so is Christ to the souls of all them that receive Him, and live upon Him by faith— the true bread that strengtheneth their hearts —the staff that sustaineth the life of God in the soul, and which it is their privilege and their happiness to commemorate as often as they eat that bread and drink that cup in the sacramental institution of their Lord in the last Supper. To force the words of Christ into a literal interpretation, because He said, "Take, eat, this is my body," is not justified by

* John vi. 57.

the expression; neither is it the spirit of the text; "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do," &c.

Secondly,—It is in direct opposition to the command of God laid down in the Scripture.

The body and blood of Christ were the elements of the sacrifice which he made upon the cross in his death, the oblation of Himself once offered. If the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper are literally his body and his blood, it is not barely the remembrance of the sacrifice which he made by his death, and the benefits which we receive thereby, but it is really the sacrifice of Christ again offered unto God, as often as we celebrate that sacrament. Such we know is the superstitious creed of the Church of Rome, against which we protest, as involving not only superstition but blasphemy. If, which we do not for a moment admit, the Eucharist be a sacrifice—if the wine is transubstantiated by the priest into the blood of Christ, yet to drink that blood would be impious—for to drink the blood of any sacrifice was an abomination to the Lord! If the Eucha-

rist is a true sacrifice, it must possess the properties of a sacrifice, and be subject to the rule laid down by the Lord in all sacrificial offerings. In all sacrifices, it was appointed that the blood should be poured out, or sprinkled, but never drank or tasted, either by priest or people. This was most solemnly prohibited by the law of Moses;* and that the same obligation is equally binding upon the christian church, you learn from the counsel of apostles and elders which was held at Jerusalem. When they met to settle certain disputes which obtained between the Jews and the Gentiles, it was decreed among other things, that they should abstain from blood.† And this rule, moreover, many years afterwards, St. Paul declared at Jerusalem, he had strictly observed in his ministry.‡ Were the Eucharist a sacrifice, therefore, it would be unlawful, yea, an abomination to the Lord to drink the blood; neither is it admissible for a moment that the Son of God would institute for his church a sacrament, the observance of

* Levit. xvii. 10—12. † Acts xv. 20, and 28, 29.
‡ Acts xxi, 25.

which would be a flagrant violation of his Father's law.

Besides this, as deposed by St. Paul, it is derogatory to the sacrifice of Christ, inasmuch as it detracts from the merit of his atoning blood. To repeat a sacrifice argues imperfection in the one offered. This is the apostle's argument when he draws the line of comparison between the sacrifice and the priesthood of Christ, and the sacrifices of the law and the Levitical priesthood. It was not necessary, he contends, that Christ should offer Himself often, "for then must He often have suffered, since the foundation of the world."* According to this reasoning, that Christ must have often suffered from the foundation of the world, if he had been offered up in the sacrifices of the law, which were types; so would he suffer often under the Gospel, if he were offered up in the sacraments, which are symbols of his sacrifice. Christ in the type, and Christ in the symbol, as to their intrinsic virtue, amount to the same thing; in both we recognise the same

* Heb. vii. 26—28; xi. 24—28.

object and the same end. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper, therefore, is not a sacrifice.

No less difficult—may we not say, perilous—is the position of those, who though they admit not the notion of a sacrifice, yet with still greater subtlety, contend, that though they cannot explain it, there is in that sacrament some kind of divine presence.

If so, then it is still an oblation of Christ, and that co-essential with Christ in the virtue of his sacrifice. And what is this but to invest it with the same properties, ascribe divine honour to it, and make it not a remembrance of the death of Christ, but an offering of the life of Christ for the fruits of his death. Is not this the secret cause of modern discord and strife?

Whence otherwise the bickerings and disputes which now convulse the Church? Whence these contentions about altars in her sanctuary? Wherefore would they displace the communion-table, and erect in its stead, raised on elevated steps, an altar of stone? To what purpose is an altar, but for a sacrifice? and what avails a sacrifice without a

priest? Does not this explain the secret? is not this the drift? is not this the dark mystery in which they would envelope the ordinance, the mystery of the beast, thereby to blind and beguile the people, enslave the mind, and give a more commanding ascendency and domination to the priest? But what, does there remain any more sacrifice for sin? and that by the intervention of another priesthood? What is this but to supplant at once the altar, the sacrifice, the priesthood of Christ? It is Christ, and not the consecration of the priest; Christ in his priestly office, who can alone give the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, and impart the divine presence, not to the ordinance, but to them that sacramentally receive it, looking unto Christ by faith in the use of it for a blessing upon it. "And I," said the Lord to his disciples, "will pray the Father, and He shall send unto you another Comforter."* Any notion therefore of a sacramental presence, or sacramental grace in the Lord's Supper, is directly opposed to the word of God.

* Luke xiv. 16, 17.

Thirdly. It is not in accordance with the instructions of the apostle given in the text: "Ye do shew the Lord's death till He come," &c. There is nothing in these words to justify the dogma of any sacramental expiation or sacramental absolution whatever inherent in this ordinance: it is to "shew the Lord's death till he come,"—his death—the end of his death—the object of his meritorious cross and passion, and the fruit thereof, as atonement by his blood, justification by his righteousness, sanctification by his Spirit. This, with a thankful remembrance of his death, we are to shew "till He come:" by this, jointly before God, severally to each other; and publicly before the Church and the world, we testify our faith in Jesus Christ—our trust in his sacrifice and death, who hath redeemed us unto God by his own blood, and made us kings and priests unto God and his Father. By this, we witness before heaven, our hope in the first resurrection, and a blissful immortality through Him, who is risen from the dead and become the first fruits of them that slept; who hath brought life and immortality

to light by the Gospel; who said, "I am the resurrection and the life, he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die." "This is the hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil; whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an High Priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec."* By this we attest and seal our belief in the promise of Christ, our confident expectation of his coming again, we "do shew the Lord's death till He come." "In my Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also."† This is the expectation, which the Lord, when He was risen again, yea, on the very day of his glorious ascension into heaven, and session at the right hand of God, assured unto the Church, by the ministry of angels, who, when

* Heb. vi. 19, 20. † John xiv. 2, 3.

He was taken up and a cloud received him out of their sight, said to the disciples as they stood entranced at the wondrous sight, "Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? this same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven."* This is the sacramental remembrance which is enjoined unto the Church by Christ, to be by them observed unto the time of the end, as also taught by his apostle in these words, "For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come." Hallelujah, Amen; even so come, Lord Jesus.

* Acts i. 11.

SERMON V

THE QUALIFICATIONS NECESSARY UNTO A DUE OBSERVANCE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.—1 Cor. xi. 27, 28.

HAVING in the foregoing verses stated the nature, the object, and the end of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, to guard against the abuse of it, and engage our devotion and religious veneration in the due observance of it, the apostle subjoins the words of the text, from which we may deduce, that to receive

the sacrament of the Lord's Supper not unworthily, it is necessary in the celebration of it, that all things be done in order according to the command of the Lord, and his purpose in that holy institution. The words convey,

First. A solemn admonition, (27 verse:) "Wherefore, whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup unworthily," &c. It is a common accusation laid to the charge of those who refuse to deify the Eucharist, and ascribe unto it that divine honour and power which do not attach to it, that they depreciate the sanctity, and derogate from the solemnity, due to that ordinance, as a sacrament of Christ's church. It does not appear, however, that St. Paul was apprehensive of any such fearful consequence, for while he continues to call the sacramental symbols when received, by the name of their unchanged properties, "this bread, and this cup," he admonishes that "whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord." This is a solemn consideration, calculated to awaken serious reflection; neither do they,

who have right conceptions of this ordinance, ever make light of it; the allegation is unjust. But to proceed. Shall we inquire, what it is that renders any person unworthy of participating in the Lord's Supper; or rather shall we not say, where is there one amongst us who is worthy of such a holy preparation, such a heavenly repast? No man is *in himself* worthy! They, and they only, are worthy, who are made so; and they are so made by the Lord himself—by a divine workmanship—by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost—"by the grace of God through faith, whereby they are washed and sanctified, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." The unworthiness here mentioned may apply many ways, either to the person of him that comes to the table, or to his manner in receiving that ordinance; to the motive that actuates him, or to the end proposed thereby. To these we shall presently advert. We must first meet an objection to the main point at issue, for here we come to another of the strongholds of those who advocate the doctrine of a

divine presence in the elements of the Lord's Supper. How, it is contended, can any one be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord in that sacrament, unless the Lord be present there? To this the answer is easy. It is no argument in favour of transubstantiation, or impanation, or any essential presence of the Lord whatever in the elements of the sacrament, that St. Paul says, of the unworthy communicant, that he is "guilty of the body and blood of Christ." The ordinance is a representative memorial of the sacrifice and death of Christ; the bread and wine in that ordinance are symbols of these things, and are therefore to be received with reverence and godly fear.

They who do not receive these holy mysteries as such, in the faith of Christ—or approach the Lord in them without due reverence and devotion—or with a heartless indifference or formality,—treat them as common things, make light of his word, count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing, and tread under foot the Son of God; for what reflects dishonour upon that ordinance, re-

flects dishonour upon the body and blood of Christ, signified therein by the bread and wine. The abuse of a sign, carries with it the abuse of that of which it is a sign; but it does not follow that the sign is the thing signified—the bread is not therefore the body, nor is the wine the blood, though both are signified thereby. Neither is the sanctity or sacred character attached to the ordinance any proof that there is a divine presence in the sign of any kind. He, for instance, who carries with him a commission, bearing the king's signature and seal, has therein the king's authority. And though by a similar figure of speech, you might say, that seal is the king, because it bears his authority; yet the king is not in the seal: any violation nevertheless of that seal would be a violation of the king's authority, and an offence to the king. So in the Lord's supper, the symbols of bread and wine, are the seals of the great king, given to us by Christ: they bear his authority, his image and superscription, but are not his person or his presence! Neither is that necessary unto their sanctity or solemn

obligation; if any man nevertheless profane that holy ordinance, he violates the seal, despises the authority, and is an offence unto God. "Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord."—v. 27.

Secondly. A word of exhortation. "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup."—v. 28.

In addressing ourselves to this duty, it is of the last consequence that we take with us a right rule for examination. There is only one legitimate rule, or infallible standard, and that is the word of God. "To the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them." By this we are to prove our meetness for the Lord's table, so that we may not "eat that bread, or drink that cup unworthily." Our meetness for the holy communion involves at least three things—our principles, our deportment, and the end we propose to ourselves in that ordinance.

1st. *Our religious principles.* In the pro

secution of this inquiry, we repeat it, the word of God alone must be our guide; every other standard will be found below proof, defective, fallacious: by such, it will amount at least but to a comparative meetness. For if we thus measure ourselves by ourselves, and compare ourselves among ourselves, we make merit the rule, and our comparative merit the standard of judgment. And by this we falsify the right rule, the word of God: for therein we learn that our meetness, like the reward, is not of merit, but of grace. As the reward is of grace and not of merit, so is the meetness, not a meetness of merit, but a meetness of grace. No man can make himself fit to hold communion with God; but he must be brought into a state of communion with God on earth, before he will be meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, and dwell in the presence of God for ever. Hence the rule laid down by St. Paul to the Corinthian church. "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates."*

* 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

We must examine ourselves whether we be in the faith; this is the first principle of all fitness for heaven and communion with God; without this St. Paul declares we are reprobates, still in our sins, in nature's unregeneracy and unbelief; a deadly malady, which no sacramental ordinance can cure; a hurt which nothing but the power of Christ himself can meet and heal; for which we are to pray, that the power of Christ may rest upon us. We must examine ourselves whether Christ be in us, whether we have in us the knowledge of Christ in spirit and in truth; the love of Christ in our hearts, and the hope of Christ in our eye; we must prove our own selves by this rule as to our principles, our views, our hopes and dependencies; prove thereby whether we are in the faith; whether our hope is according to the hope of eternal life, as set before us in the gospel, by the faith that is in Christ Jesus. Without this what are sacraments; we cannot have righteousness and life by them. "Grace and truth come by Jesus Christ," by whom also, "we have access by faith into the grace

wherein we stand, and rejoice in the hope of the glory of God."

The sacrament is not the medium of our acceptance with the Father, but Christ, "in whom we have redemption, through his blood, the forgiveness of sins,"—there is no mediation in the sacrament, Christ is the alone Mediator, who now sitteth at the right hand of God, where "he ever liveth to make intercession for us." It is not the sacrament, or any grace in that which gives us access unto God, but the grace that is in Christ Jesus: "No man cometh unto the Father but by the Son;" and he that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." If, therefore, we have Christ, we have eternal life, and all things else by him: "All things are yours, for ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's." We may, then, come to his table, and keep the feast, as he has commanded us, "This do in remembrance of me." "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup." But here, that no stumbling-block may he thrown in the way of the meek-

hearted, that the lambs of the flock may not be made afraid, it behoves us to remark, that in his exhortation, the apostle does not exact at the hands of any *the assurance of faith*, but simply the faith of Christ. There are many in the faith of Christ, who have not *the assurance of faith*. Indeed, were the door of the ordinance to be closed against all but the assured believer, then a large proportion of the dear people of God, would be shut out. But no, if you are sensible of your ruin by sin, and convinced of your helpless and hopeless condition without Christ, and make Christ the sole object of your hope and dependence, and trust in Him for all things; to you is this salvation sent, you are invited to come to the Lord's table; and though there be no grace in the sacrament, if in the use of that you look unto Jesus for a blessing, who is the author and giver of all grace, the blessing of the Lord will be upon you, who can make that and every other means of grace to you, a season of refreshing and strengthening to your souls.

It concerns also, 2ndly, our demeanor,

I mean by this, the spirit and the manner in which we approach the Lord's table. It will be understoo by all, even as it is implied, that the espousal of right principles will be accompanied with, and be seen, in the demonstration of right practices. It is presumed, therefore, that the conversation of such persons, their daily walk, will be according to the gospel of Jesus Christ. "Let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another."*

It is more especially to the spirit and manner becoming us, and which become every man, in the celebration of the ordinance, to which we here speak. Where there is, for instance, a careless, thoughtless, or formal manner in approaching the Lord's table, it argues, if not contempt, at least a disregard of the solemn intention of that holy ordinance; and in that, a want of due reverence for the sacrifice of Christ, which is the subject of it; and the majesty of Christ, who is the author of it. The man who is admitted

* Gal. vi. 4.

into the presence of a king, has regard, not only to his garments but his demeanor; but to sit down at the king's table, as it implies greater honour, and greater favour, so does it demand a higher tone of devotion and respect. If in one ordinance more than another, we draw nigh unto God, it is in the Lord's Supper. We are here admitted to the table of the King of kings! to approach that, not unworthily, it must be with the utmost seriousness and solemnity. Does this derogate from the sanctity of the ordinance? No, it bespeaks adoration without idolatry, devotion without superstition, communion without hypocrisy, worship without formality.

3rdly. They end we propose. The eat the sacramental bread and wine unworthily, who receive them to answer unworthy ends and purposes—as to be seen of men, to be thought something, devout in spirit and devotional in heart unto God, while their hearts are far from him. They also receive unworthily who expect to procure eternal life and happiness thereby, acceptance with God, a meetness for heaven, and a title to glory; who, because

they have eaten at the Lord's table, and drank his cup, in the church-ordinance of his sanctuary below, expect, therefore, that they shall sit down at the Lord's table in the sanctuary above, with the saints, at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

SERMON VI.

THE VINDICATION OF THE ORDINANCE FROM THE ERRORS OF SUPERSTITION AND IDOLATRY.

For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.—1 Cor. xi. 29.

It is a weighty consideration that is here set before us; yea, a solemn warning, worthy the most serious attention of all those who approach the Lord's table, in the sacrament of the Lord s Supper. "For," to use the language of the church service, "as the benefit is great, if with a true penitent heart and lively faith we receive that holy sacrament; (for then we spiritually eat the flesh

of Christ, and drink his blood; then we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us; we are one with Christ, and Christ with us;) so is the danger great, if we receive the same unworthily. For then we are guilty of the body and blood of Christ our Saviour; we eat and drink our own damnation, not considering the Lord's body."

This is in strict accordance with the words of the text, "For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, &c." This is the solemn exhortation with which the apostle concludes his remarks on this subject. And seeing that through a misunderstanding of the expression, it amounts in some to that fearful intimidation which excludes them entirely from the Lord's table; and in others has been the generating cause of a superstitious awe amounting to an idolatrous worship at the ordinance; we shall

First, Explain the term here used, if, peradventure, we may thereby remove the cause of intimidation—"Eateth and drinketh damnation to himself."

In whatever sense the apostle may here

speak, it is a solemn consideration; but still more fearful would be the thought, were the term to be understood in that acceptation, in which it is ordinarily received in our common phraseology: to eat and drink "*damnation*" would, in that sense, be to incur the bitter pains of eternal death. By this, however, St. Paul does not mean *eternal damnation*, the lake of brimstone and fire, which is the second death, the portion of the unbelievers, where they shall be tormented for ever and ever, "whosoever is not found written in the book of life." The meaning is, as the word may be also rendered—guilt or judgment, which entails temporary afflictions, divine visitations, the rebukes and chastisements of the Lord. He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, contracts guilt, brings thereby guilt upon his soul, and provokes the Lord to rebuke and chasten him. This we assume, not barely upon the interpretation of the word, but from the explanation given by the apostle, in the following verses. "For this cause, many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." ver. 30.

The judgments here meant, which some of the Corinthian church had also entailed upon themselves for eating and drinking unworthily, were, you observe, sickness, weakness, physical debility, mental distress; in some cases terminating in nature's dissolution; "and many sleep;" a scripture expression, for those who die in the Lord, and therefore they did not die eternally. On this ground the apostle goes on farther to urge the duty of self-examination, to which he had before exhorted, "For if we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged;" ver. 31; viz. if we try, and prove, and condemn ourselves, for aught that we may find amiss in us,—if we confess our sins, and mourn over them,—and are humbled under a sense of them, and our own unworthiness,—then we shall not provoke the judgments of God against ourselves. And this he enforces, by showing the design and the end of the Lord, in those visitations. "But when we are judged we are chastened of the Lord, that we should not be condemned with the world." ver. 32.

The judgments of the Lord upon his church

are not purely punishments, but chastenings sent not in wrath, but in love, and the end is, that they may be saved, and "not condemned with the world," or perish eternally with the world of the ungodly. From hence it is clear that the apostle throughout has been speaking of the Lord's people, true believers; and therefore he did not mean by this word, eternal death; for such shall not come into that condemnation. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my word, and believeth on Him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation, but is passed from death unto life."* And hence also in conclusion, he counsels them as brethren: "wherefore, *my brethren,* when ye come together to eat, &c." ver. 33, 34, viz. let all things be done well and in order, in a right spirit, in a becoming manner, that ye entail not upon yourselves the chastisements and rebukes of the Lord; "that ye come not together into condemnation." This is the sense of the term here used, which speaks not the language of inti-

* John v. 24.

midation, but that of salutary caution to all who approach the Lord's table. While this expression, however, proves a terror to some, it is the sentiment expressed in the remaining words of the text, which is the innocent cause of idolatrous worship in others. Let us, therefore,

Secondly, Examine the argument, adduced in favour of the doctrine of a divine presence in the Eucharist, fvom the last clause of the text. "Not discerning the Lord's body." The meaning of the apostle is plain—not discerning—not discriminating between that bread and common bread, not making any difference between the sacramental bread and the Lord's body; not considering the Lord's body, his crucified body, his sacrifice and death, of which the bread in that ordinance is a sacred and solemn memorial. But on the other hand, and in opposition to this, much weight is attached to this expression, "Not discerning the Lord's body," as well as to the judgments here said to be consequent upon eating and drinking unworthily. It is contended that the visitations

of God are upon all them that do not "*discern*" in that ordinance "the Lord's body," or *the Lord's presence of some kind, in the bread or the symbol of it.* The power of God, it is ignorantly said, must be in it, or it would not come out of it. This may seem very plausible, but it does not follow. On the contrary, we hold that any such notion is akin to Antichrist, is the foster-parent of superstition and idolatry, and are bound, therefore, as we value our soul's eternal peace, to meet and repel the mischievous assertion. This we do on the following grounds:

1st. *The doctrine is unscriptural.* The chastisements or the rebukes of God, visited by the Lord upon those who had been guilty of an abuse of a sacrament of his house, is no proof at all of any divine presence in the symbols. Such visitations are not peculiar unto, or identical of, a sacrament. The ark of the covenant was a symbol of the divine presence—but God was not in the ark. The ark was the glory of Israel, but a terror to the nations. The ark was a shield unto Israel, but a sword to their enemies; it

brought plagues, and diseases, and sundry kinds of death upon the Philistines. Dagon fell mutilated before the ark—the ark smote Uzzah; when Uzzah put forth his hand to steady the ark, a pious feeling this, a good intention on his part, because the ark was shook by the oxen; but God made a breach upon Uzzah, there and then, for he died. But the same ark was a blessing to Obed-Edom, of the family of Levi; he discerned between the symbols and the presence of Jehovah; he worshipped God, and not the ark, but God in a right use of it. "And the Lord blessed the house of Obed-Edom, and all that pertained unto him, because of the ark of God." Now the ark of the covenant was not a sacrament of the Jewish church, yet a blessing and a curse was in it, and justice and judgment were executed by it, because it was a symbol of the Most High. So the rebukes and chastisements of God consequent upon the abuse of his holy ordinance, is no proof of the real presence, nor is the Lord there present in any other way, than he was in the ark of the covenant, as in

all other holy institutions, the means and ordinances of grace, over which He at all times exercises and demonstrates a watchful jealousy.

Again, the priesthood under the law was not a sacrament, but when Korah, Dathan, and Abiram invaded the priesthood, and so dishonoured that ordinance of God, the earth opened her mouth and swallowed them up, and fire from heaven consumed them, and their company, all their blind and deluded followers. Shall we here make mention of the calf in Horeb,* or shall we remind you of the judgments of the Lord in the matter of Baal-Peor.† Time would fail to collect together all the scripture evidence that might be brought forward to prove how continually the hand of God had been stretched out, to vindicate the honour of his name, in the defence, as well of the purity of the worship of his house, as the sacraments of his table. To argue, therefore, the doctrine of a divine presence in the symbols of a sacrament, from the judgments inflicted by the

* Ps. cvi. 19—23 † Ps. cvi. 25—29.

hand of God, upon an abuse of them, has no foundation in Scripture. Again,

2d.—*It is a soul-destroying doctrine.* Pregnant with the seeds of superstition and credulity, it blinds the mind and warps the judgment — pollutes the worship of God, makes the ordinances of his house, his sacraments and sabbaths an abomination; it turns bread into poison, and destroys the souls of them that eat it, and hope to live by it! Let it not be thought a light thing to corrupt either the word or the worship of God; the poisoned bowl, however sweet the wine, when taken inwardly, will destroy the life:—the poison, though mixed with wine, blended and hidden, is poison still—its deleterious property remains as it was, unchanged! Such are the inventions of men, mixed up with the word and sacraments of God. For the profanation of an ordinance of God, Nadab and Abihu were consumed. They meant to worship God, their motive was good, but their manner was evil. They brought strange fire before the Lord, not kindled from a live coal from off the altar, the fire that came down

from heaven to consume the sacrifice—but common fire, and so called strange fire, for which they were consumed by fire from heaven. And such is the fire and such the incense of all those who intruding into those things which they have not seen, and which God has not commanded, do bring before him, in a sacrament, especially ordained as a remembrance, the form of a superstitious and idolatrous worship. They bring before the Lord strange fire—strange doctrines, not according to God's holy ordinance—not according to the form of sound words spoken by Jesus Christ, but according to human inventions and traditions, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. These are the censers in which they bear their incense-offerings, every man taking his own censer after his own heart's desire, his own thoughts and imaginations; this is the incense they bear—not the incense which is called "*the prayers of the saints,*" which is the worship of God in spirit and in truth, according to the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him, but the in-

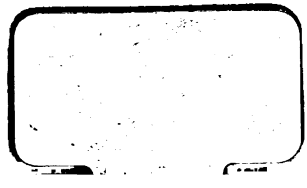
cense of a blind superstition, form, will-worship, in self-righteousness, and self-love; and though it may carry with it the appearance of seriousness and zeal, it is a false zeal, a zeal not according to knowledge, but the spirit of error. It is not thus that Christ has commanded us to keep a feast unto the Lord; and they who in this spirit approach his table are in danger of eating and drinking unworthily, and provoking the Lord to jealousy, "not discerning the Lord's body."

3rdly.—*It is the doctrine of antichrist.*—If there be any kind of divine presence in the sacrament, it must be God's gracious presence, and then there must be grace in it—not common, but *especial saving grace*—the grace which cometh by Jesus Christ, otherwise it would be death to all who eat, for "God out of Christ is a consuming fire." But if that be true, it must be life to all, and whosoever eateth that sacramental bread shall live for ever. If so, how can it be unprofitable to any—yea, prejudicial and dangerous? The answer given to this is as subtle as it is deceptive: it is the unbelief of man, it is

said, that makes it hurtful; but they who draw nigh with faith, and not unworthily, find a blessing in it. But if the Lord has made this ordinance impregnate with his saving grace, shall the unbelief of man make the faith or the grace of Christ of none effect? It is true, that to such as receive it without faith, it will be an unprofitable ordinance—but what does that prove? St. Paul speaks after the same manner, as touching the Gospel preached. "The word preached did not profit them," (the unbelieving Jews,) "not being mixed with faith in them that heard it." There is as much grace then essentially in the preached word, as in the sacramental symbols, and no more—there is no difference between them! But what then, it is asked, makes it a profitable ordinance? Is it not faith? Yes! but what is faith? It is looking unto Christ manifest in the flesh, beholding the presence of God in Christ, and not Christ impaned in the sacrament, or the presence of the body and blood of Christ in any sense or any way in the bread and wine. It is not faith, properly speaking, that makes the ordi-

nance profitable—but Christ who makes it a blessing to all who receive it by faith in remembrance of Him. To reason otherwise, is to contend, either that the faith of the recipient puts grace into the ordinance, or else, because he believes there is a divine presence in the ordinance, therefore Christ puts the grace into it. By this rule of sacramental grace, so stoutly maintained by the Church of Rome, faith is made the generating cause of grace, and not grace the cause of faith; faith is no longer the exercise of grace in the heart, in a believing dependence upon Jesus Christ, but the meritorious and procuring cause of grace in the sacrament, from which it derives all its virtue, all its sanctifying properties. Thus faith takes the place of Christ—the sacrament fills the office of his mediation—grace is made a debtor to faith, and faith is no longer a grace, but a virtue, and we are saved not by grace through faith, which is the gift of God, but by works, the deeds of the law by which no flesh living can be justified! What then is this but antichrist? What but to frustrate the grace of God and make the word

of God of none effect? In the Scripture, it is expressly declared, that there is only one Mediator between God and man, the God-man Christ Jesus, that the sacrifice of his body and blood, the oblation of Himself once offered, is the only meritorious and procuring cause of all grace—that by Christ alone we can draw nigh unto the Father, for no man cometh to the Father but by the Son—that the Father is the God of all grace, the *Author* and *Giver* of it, who has treasured up all grace in his Son, as the head over all things to the church which is his body, the fulness of Him who filleth all in all—out of whose fulness we all receive grace for grace!" We hold, therefore, that the doctrine of sacramental grace, or what is the same thing, of any kind of divine presence whatever in the sacramental symbols, is superstition, idolatry, antichrist, to be abjured of all men.

THE END.

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